Crossing Paths

WITH WILDLIFE IN WASHINGTON TOWNS AND CITIES

Fall 2002

Save your sanctuary forever and maybe taxes, too

Many Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary (BWS) managers ask, or make incorrect assumptions, about the legal status accorded their efforts through this Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) program.

BWS certification does not provide your property with any new or different legal protections or restrictions. Your natural landscaping efforts may help with property appreciation value, and a displayed certification sign can draw the attention of potential buyers also interested in wildlife. But there's nothing in the program that ensures your sanctuary is maintained.

There are, however, some options for preserving your hard work – and local wildlife homes – into perpetuity, and possibly even ways to save on taxes. BWS certification won't guarantee that your property will qualify, but these are worth looking into:

(Continued on page 4)

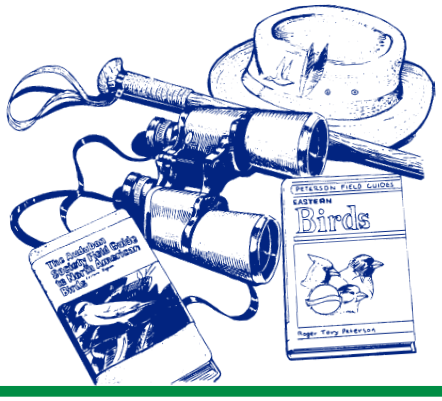
Backyard wildlife watching is big business

by Dr. Jeff Koenings, WDFW Director

Did you know your avocation is big business in Washington and that you share it with almost half of the rest of the state?

Wildlife watching around home is enjoyed by 2,105,000 Washington citizens, according to the recently-released results of the 2001 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) recreation survey. Combined with 1,065,000 who also travel the state to watch wildlife, overall spending to enjoy these pursuits totals more than $1.3 billion.

That makes your purchases of birdseed, feeders, binoculars, field guides, and other goods and services a very healthy part of Washington's economy.



It also makes Washington the fifth highest wildlife-watching state in the country, based on percentage of participation by the entire population. That's 49% of Washington residents, compared to a national average of 31%.

The USFWS survey has been conducted about every five years since 1955 and serves as an economic value measure for everything from threatened and endangered species to wildlife lost in oil spills.

The survey also tracks fishing and hunting participation and economic values. In Washington, 938,000 fish and 227,000 hunt, making up about 21% of our population. Recreational fishing puts about $1billion into our economy and hunting $408 million.

While fishing and hunting continue to be an important part of Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) management and the state's economy, rates of participation in both have declined over the decades.

Wildlife watching, on the other hand, has steadily increased and remains stable. Backyard wildlife watching, (called "residential" in the survey) is the biggest part of that growth.

If you'd like to learn more about your fellow backyard wildlife watchers from the survey, see

The National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation **at** www.fws.gov**.**

And thanks for your big business!

Crossing Paths is a twice-yearly newsletter for Washington residents enrolled in the Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program.

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Crossing Paths Newsletter

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Washington Department of FISH and WILDLIFE

Living with Washington's Wildlife: Tree Squirrels (Part 2)

(Editor's note: WDFW's Seattle-area urban wildlife biologist Russell Link is compiling a series of "Living With Washington's Wildlife" factsheets for distribution at regional offices, eventual posting on our website, and part of a new book, "Living With Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest." This newsletter regularly features excerpts from that work. This second of three parts on tree squirrels focuses on dealing with problems that squirrels create when searching for food or nesting material; the spring 2003 edition will address what to do when a squirrel's search for a nest site takes it into your attic or chimney.)

A tree squirrel's search for food or nesting material may bring it to a birdfeeder, orchard, or flower garden. The most effective way to prevent conflicts is to modify the habitat around your home so it will not attract squirrels. Examples include:

Don't feed squirrels: Squirrels that are artificially fed may lose their fear of humans and could become aggressive. Artificial feeding also tends to concentrate tree squirrels in a small area; overcrowding can encourage diseases and parasites. In addition, these squirrels might approach a neighbor who doesn't share your appreciation of the animals. The neighbor might even choose to remove these squirrels.

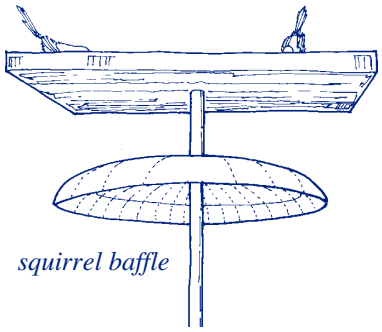
Prevent access to birdfeeders. There are many feeder designs on the market advertised to be squirrel-resistant. Some are effective, but many are not. One type is a tube feeder enclosed in a cage that allows small birds to pass through freely; such cages may also be purchased separately for use with existing feeders. However, this style of feeder will block access to large birds and may not exclude small and immature squirrels.

To prevent squirrels from jumping to a feeder, place the feeder at least 6 feet off the ground and at least 10 feet from the nearest tall shrub, tree limb, deck, or other structure. To prevent squirrels from climbing the wires, poles, or chains on which feeders are mounted, suspend a commercially available dome- or cone-shaped "squirrel baffle" above and/or below the feeder to prevent squirrels from climbing.

A home-made version is to suspend your feeder from a horizontal wire, placing two, 24-inch lengths of 1-inch PVC pipe around the wire on either side of the feeder. Two large soda bottles strung on either side of the feeder may also work.

Use heavy gauge wire to hang the feeder, squirrels will chew through almost anything else, dropping the feeder to the ground.

Another way to discourage squirrels from eating birdseed is to offer birds foods that squirrels do not like. For example, squirrels will sometimes ignore safflower seed, millet, and plain suet (without nuts or peanut butter). However, these foods may not be as popular with the bird species you want to attract, and squirrels may eat them if they are hungry.



squirrel baffle

Prevent nesting in birdhouses. Attach a pre-drilled metal plate (available from stores catering to the bird feeding public) over the hole, or attach aluminum flashing to the front and drill an entry hole of the correct size through the flashing. File down any sharp edges. Boxes with entry holes large enough to accommodate large birds (and squirrels) should be put out only when the desired bird species is seen, or during its known nesting season. To prevent squirrels from climbing up a pole or other structure supporting a birdhouse, install a commercially available barrier. A home-made version is a 24-inch-tall aluminum flashing cylinder placed at least 6 feet up the tree trunk or other support. The cylinder should have overlapping edges and be secured so that it can expand to allow for tree growth. (This will not work if there is a tall tree or structure within 6 feet.)

Protect plants. If squirrels are removing the bark of certain trees to use as food or nesting material, apply a commercially available repellant to the vulnerable areas or loosely wrap them with 1-inch chicken wire. If they are climbing trees to eat fruit or nuts, remove lower branches and install an aluminum flashing cylinder as described above**.** Seeds and seedlings can be covered with a temporary wire cage or netting. Where bulbs are being dug up, chicken wire can be laid down, securely staked, and lightly mulched. A commercial repellant, available from nurseries and hardware stores, can also be used in the area.

Prevent access to your home: Repair or replace loose or rotting siding, boards, and shingles. Cover vents with 1/2-inch welded-wire mesh (hardware cloth), and keep tree branches 10 feet away from the sides and tops of buildings. Note: Dryer vent screens need to be cleaned frequently or replaced with models designed to exclude animals without lint clogging. Cap your chimney with a commercially designed and engineered chimney cap. (Most hardware stores carry them.)

Squirrels can be stopped from traveling on wires by installing three-foot sections of 2-3 inch diameter plastic pipe. Split the pipe lengthwise, spread the opening apart, and place it over the wire. The pipe will rotate on the wire and the squirrel will tumble off. Do not attempt to install pipe over high-voltage wires. Contact your local electricity/utility company for assistance.

Public Health Concerns: Tree squirrels might carry diseases that could affect humans but actual cases are rare. Rabies has not been found in any tree squirrel populations in Washington. If you see a tree squirrel engaging in unusual behavior, such as repeatedly falling over or circling a small area, such behavior may result from an injury, poisoning, or inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) caused by a parasite.

If a person is bitten or scratched by a squirrel, immediately clean the wound by thoroughly scrubbing it with soap and water. Flush the wound liberally, using clean tap water. If the person was bitten, contact a physician and the local health department. If you can place a large bucket over the squirrel and secure the bucket with a heavy object, the animal can then be held for inspection.

Butterfly watching gaining popularity

(excerpted in part from Cox News Service and Spokesman-Review stories)

Move over, birders. Trails and paths that are filled with bird-watchers on weekends are becoming popular with another breed of nature observers: butterfly-watchers.

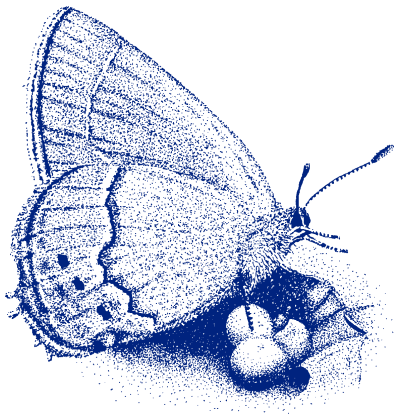
In fact, butterfly-watching closely parallels bird-watching, and it is rapidly gaining popularity across the country. "Wild Bird" magazine calls butterflies "the next wave of watchable wildlife."

Some experts say butterfly-watching now is where bird-watching was 20 years ago, but rapidly catching up. The North American Butterfly Association was founded in 1992 and now has 4,000 members and 30 chapters nationwide.

There are no specific figures on the number of all butterfly watchers, but there are about 15,000 butterfly species known in the world, nearly 200 of them in the Pacific Northwest.

Washington's own butterfly expert Robert Michael Pyle chronicles all of those local species in his new (and 15th!) book "The Butterflies of Cascadia,'' (Seattle Audubon, $29.95), a spectacular guide to the butterflies of Washington, Oregon and surrounding areas.

Another new book is available for almost half the cost and is adequate for casual butterfly observers. "The Guide To Butterflies of Oregon and Washington,'' by William Neill (Westcliffe, $17.95) is a clear and concise guide with a good photo of each of the 100 species described .



But "The Butterflies of Cascadia'' tackles the subject in more breadth and depth, covering all the species and subspecies known in the Pacific Northwest. Several photos are shown for each species to illustrate different color phases and Pyle includes his personal insights and essays on what they mean to him after years of study.

"Butterflies are neither minted like coins nor printed like stamps: they are the products of parents with differing traits, and therefore each one is an original,'' writes Pyle.

Pyle also encourages people to invite butterflies into their yards by cultivating plants specifically to lure them.

"At the alpha level," Pyle said, "this merely involves growing nectar plants for attracting adults. The more satisfying beta level will lead you to include caterpillar host plants, in hopes that your garden will actually provide breeding habitat for visiting species."

Butterflies are really two distinct types of animals during their lives.

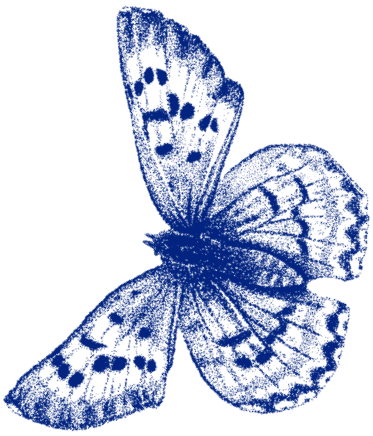
"They begin active life as crawling, chewing, worm-like neuters," Pyle writes, "and finish as flying, sucking, highly sexual creatures.''

Their larval needs encompass greenery such as leaves. Sometimes the needs are very specific, as with the Monarch's dependence on milkweed.

But food is not the only habitat requirement for any of the butterfly's stages.

"Most species hibernate as egg, small caterpillar, or chrysalis, withstanding the cold through physiological adaptations,'' Pyle writes. But a few species can weather winter in some portions of the Pacific Northwest as adults. They rely on habitat factors we don't normally associate with butterflies, such as the type of holes cavity-nesting birds require.

"They come out on warm days, so if you see a mourning cloak or satyr angelwing on New Year's or Valentine's



day, you won't be hallucinating.'' Pyle writes.

Flower nectar, the adult butterfly's primary food, is only one of its habitat needs. They also like rotting fruit, running sap, and the honeydew of aphids. Males sometimes get down and dirty, lured in swarms called "mud-puddle clubs" to probe mud and damp sand for dissolved mineral salts, especially where some animal has urinated.

"Butterflies, mostly males, also throng to carrion and scat, attracted by the smell of decomposing materials rich in the amino acids and other organic compounds they need," writes Pyle. "The sight of ethereal butterflies sucking up to roadkill, bear poop or horse pee turns Ms. Millay's verse on its head,'' he writes.

In the poem "Mariposa," Edna St. Vincent Millay wrote, "Mark the transient butterfly / How he hangs upon the flower."

Tip of the season:

Leave nestboxes up through the winter. Some of Washington's resident species, like woodpeckers and chickadees, are known to use them as protected night roosting spots. Just be sure to clean them out and repair them in March for the next nest builders.

Save your sanctuary forever and maybe taxes, too *(continued from page 1)*

Land Trusts

Land trusts are local, regional, or satewide non-profit organizations directly involved in protecting important land resources for public benefit. Depending on the size and extent of your backyard wildlife sanctuary, your property could be considered such a resource.

Land trusts are able to use a variety of flexible and creative conservation methods that achieve conservation goals while meeting the specific needs of the community and landowner. Many approaches offer income, estate, or property tax benefits, including:

Donation — An outright donation of land to a willing land trust releases the landowner from the responsibility of managing the land can can provide substantial income tax deductions and estate tax benefits, while avoiding any capital gains taxes that would have resulted from selling the property. Some land donations, such a charitable gift annuities and charitable remainder annuities, allow landowners to continue to receive income during their lifetimes.

Bargain Sale of Land – In a bargain sale the landowner sells the land for less than its fair market value to gain several benefits, including cash provisions, avoidance of some capital gains tax, and entitlement to charitable income tax deductions (based on the difference between the land's fair market value and its sale price).

Conservation Easement – A conservation easement is a legal agreement between a landowner and the land trust that permanently limits use of the land in order to project its conservation values. It allows the landowner to continue to own and use the land and to sell it or pass it on to heirs. Conservation easements are flexible land protection tools. AN easement on property containing rare wildlife habitat might prohibit development, for example, while another one might allow continued farming the building of agricultural structures. A conservation easement donation can qualify as a tax-deductible charitable donation and may result in property and estate tax savings. Whether donated during the landowner's life or by will, it can make a critical difference in the heirs' ability to keep the land intact.

To find out more about how land trusts work and if there is land trust in your area, contact the Land Trust Alliance of the Northwest, (www.lta.org/regionallta/northwest.htm) 3517 NE 45th St., Seattle, WA† 98105-5640, 206-522-3134, or e-mail **ltanw@lta.org**.

PBRS

Incentive programs for preserving open space on private property are offered by some counties and local jurisdictions through Public Benefit Rating Systems (PBRS). These programs provide tax relief to the landowner if their land contains valuable open space resources.

It works this way: a "current use taxation" property tax assessment for the open space is established lower than the "highest and best use" assessment level that usually applies on most land in the county. The calculation of the current use taxation value is based on a PBRS scoring system, with a number of points assigned for specific open space qualification.

This system, established by the state under RCW Chapter 84.34, weights the tax incentive toward particularly desirable open space features. Individual jurisdictions usually adopt their own criteria to evaluation the public benefit of the property. The rating systems usually includes points o land qualifying as high, medium, or low property resources, and bonus points for additional public benefit such as public access, extra surface water buffer, joint applications, and conservation/historic easements in perpetuity.

In King County, for example, the reduction in taxable value ranges from 50% to 90% for the portion of the property in "current use." The maximum 90% tax reduction might be given for property (or portions of property) qualifying as a high property resource with public access and a conservation easement in perpetuity.

To find out more about the PBRS in your county of residence and how you might apply for eligibility, call your county tax assessor.

Bat behavior monitored

The rare Townsend's big-eared bat colony north of Spokane that is featured on WDFW's "BatCam" on the website (www.wa.gov/wdfw) is being monitored by Eastern Washington University graduate student Theresa Mathis under the direction of Dr. Peggy O'Connell.

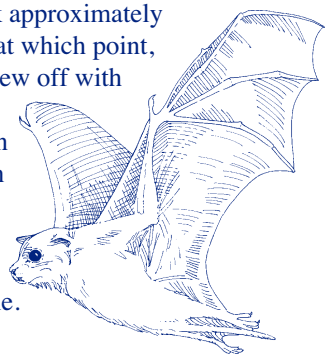
Theresa's latest report provides some interesting insight into bat behavior and seasonal activity that BWS managers with other more common bats might find interesting:

"This has been a very exciting year for observing Washington's easternmost colony of Townsend's big-eared bats. With the first appearance of bats to the maternity colony on April 4th , I thought we were off and running. However, the bats had very different ideas.

Throughout April, May, and June the bats came and went. The most bats present were 52 on June 26th. Many days there were no bats present at all.

Then the "season" began with a bang on July 5th with the arrival of 85 bats. By July 7th their numbers had increased to 103. The first birth observed occurred midmorning on July 9th. The entire process, from the onset of labor until the young was cleaned up and nursing, took approximately 1 1/2 hours, at which point, the mother flew off with her young.

Just eleven days later, on July 16th, the first juvenile was seen roosting alone.



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Whose big nest is that?

By Patricia Thompson

We at WDFW get calls year-round about big nests, often from people thinking they have an eagle nest in their backyard. Usually it turns out to be a nice cozy squirrel's lodge, a crow's nest or, if they are lucky, a red-tailed hawk nest.

Often people want to think that their large nest is a peregrine falcon's, but peregrines very rarely nest in trees and do not really build nests. If they do nest in a tree, it is in someone else's abandoned nest or a large tree cavity.

We would like to help you identify the large nests in your area for several reasons:

- Help us spot and map the raptor (bird of prey, the hawks, eagles and falcons) nests
- Report potential development around protected nests
- Know whether or when you may or may not remove the tree

We also want you to call us as soon as you know of an eagle, peregrine or red-tailed hawk nest; we will map them and report them to the local jurisdictions for protection, and advise you what to do if you have a problem with the nest or the tree it is in.

To help distinguish nests, even without seeing any identifiable birds, ask yourself these questions: How large is the nest (diameter), what is the nest made of – branches, sticks, twigs or grass, how big are the sticks, how high is the nest, what kind of tree is it in, how tall is the tree, is it in a forest or on the edge, how long has it been there, have you seen any birds going in or out of the nest?

Nest characteristics of different species of birds vary. Even squirrel nests are identifiable, although some birds such as crows, sharp-shinned hawks and Cooper's hawks will use squirrel nests.

Eagles

Eagles build the largest nests and there are both bald eagles and golden eagles in Washington. Golden eagles are almost exclusively on the east side of the state, and most of the bald eagles nest on the west side of the state.

Bald eagles build the grand daddy of all nests. They are massive platforms typically 6 feet in diameter made of sticks and branches placed in large trees. Look for nests constructed with very large sticks, some an inch or more in diameter and maybe up to 5 feet long. The largest old nests are known to be 12 ft high and 8 1/2 feet across. West of the Cascades, Douglas fir is used most frequently, arge cottonwoods are used a lot, and Sitka spruce is used occasionally. East of the Cascades, Ponderosa pine is most preferred, then Douglas fir, with cottonwoods also used. Nest trees tend to be larger than the surrounding trees. Trees are typically 100 – 200 feet tall and the nests are usually 30 – 60 feet off the ground, sometimes higher. Bald eagles use their nests year after year; some nests have been used for more than 35 years. Bald eagles also have alternate nests. Water will almost always be nearby. Bald eagle nests can be very conspicuous. On the west side of the state especially, bald eagles have taken to nesting in very urban areas, even in Seattle. See WDFW's "EagleCam" on our web site (www.wa.gov/wdfw) to get a great view of a bald eagle nest.

Golden eagles construct large platform nests usually on cliffs or rock ledges and only sometimes in trees. Thick branches, twigs and stems of any kind are used to construct the nests. Like bald eagles, golden eagles will use their nests year after year. New nests are about 2 1/2 feet in diameter; old nests are about 5 – 6 feet across after they have been added to year after year. Nests can be 1 1/2 to 5 feet high. The nests in trees can be placed from 10 to 100 feet off the ground.

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Bat behavior monitored *(continued from page 4)*

By July 20th juvenile bats were roosting in clusters together and the first juvenile flights were observed July 24th.

By August 1st some of the juveniles were emerging with the adults. It appears they are staying near the cabin and just trying out their wings.

Some possible things to see via the bat cameras on the website is "allogrooming" or bats grooming each other. This doesn't happen often but is quite interesting to watch when it does. They bite around the ears and the neck, sometimes they bite along the back and then the belly, but most of the attention is paid around the neck and base of the ears.

Most of the crawling that is seen is probably being done by a juvenile bat. They will land and crawl from one cluster to another. Or, if the mother has left it roosting alone, it may crawl to another nearby bat.

As of August 3rd many of the mothers were still carrying their young and nursing continues. Many of the young are getting quite large and they seem to lag behind during flight and landings. You may also catch a glimpse of a juvenile roosting on the back of an adult female with a young under her wing.

Emergence, or when the bats leave the roost at night to forage, is generally occurring between 8:45pm and 9:30pm. Once the adults have left the cabin the young bats can be seen flying around inside the cabin. Several can be caught in one image at a time on the camera. On nights when emergence is not being taped we will try to focus the camera on a group of roosting juveniles. However, as they are very active (think toddler) they may move out of camera range."

Whose big nest is that *(continued from page 5)*

Sometimes first year bald eagles are mistaken for golden eagles. Bald eagles gradually molt into their white heads and tails over the course of 4 – 5 years and look mottled brown, like very dark marble, in their first and second years. If you have a nest in or near your yard, it is probably not a golden eagle's.

Hawks

Red-tailed hawks nest in wide variety of habitats. They prefer to have open access into their nests so nest trees are usually on the edge of a woodland overlooking a field or open land or sometimes in a small clump of large trees surrounded by meadow. Nests are bulky and outside diameter of the nest is about 2 – 2 1/2 feet. Nests can get pretty deep, sometimes 2 feet high, and are made of large sticks, smaller than what eagles use but much larger than crows or squirrels, about 1/2 inch in diameter mixed with smaller sticks.

Red-tails usually place their nests about 50 - 60 feet up tree but nest height can range from 35 – 90 feet. The nest is anywhere in the tree where branches will support the nest but most commonly on branches against the main trunk. Nest trees will usually be the largest and strongest trees but nest trees can be surprisingly small. Red-tails normally nest in deciduous trees such as cottonwood and maple, but will choose evergreens, especially Douglas fir, where the nest is extremely difficult to see. They also nest on cliffs where trees are scarce. Red-tails will be seen perched by and soaring over their nests, and if you approach the nest, you will hear them make their defensive cry. They, too, will nest in the middle of urban areas where they seem to like edges of highways.

Cooper's hawks and sharp-shinned hawks are small, similar hawks who nest in mostly mixed coniferous-deciduous forests, sometimes in groves of trees in open country, but they prefer thick cover when available. Unlike red-tailed hawks, they usually nest in the interior of forests and woodlots. Sometimes Cooper's hawks will nest in wooded areas near edges of fields or water openings. Cooper's and sharp-shinned hawks (*accipiters*) place their nests at a height of about 35-45 feet, but can be 10 – 60 feet up tree.

Nests are broad flat platforms made of twigs and bark, unlike the large bulky nest of the red-tail, and are usually built on a horizontal branch by the trunk of the tree. Nests will be much smaller than eagles and red-tails and the sticks and twigs are very much smaller in diameter. Nests are about two feet across and 6 – 8 inches thick. They will occasionally build on old crow and squirrel nests. It's easy to confuse these hawk's nests with crows and squirrel nests. The lining of the nest may be several inches deep by the time the chicks hatch because they continually add material throughout incubation. It would not be unusual to see a Cooper's hawk nest in suburban wooded areas.

Crows

Crows build cup nests typical of songbirds but the size of Cooper's or sharp-shinned hawks' nests. They place their nests from 10 to 70 feet high in shrubs and deciduous or coniferous trees; in conifers on the west side of the state they can be very difficult to see. The nest is made of twigs and coarse stems, lined with bark strips and fibers, sometimes mud or earth. Crows build their nests in 5-13 days and they are often used over again in successive years. Watch for crows carrying twigs into trees when they are nest building. Crow fledglings are very noisy. If you hear noisy crows in early suumer, they are probably the young birds begging for food at a nearby nest . Crows will build their nest in urban areas where trees are available.

Eastern Gray Squirrels

Eastern gray squirrels typically crawl into holes of trees during winter and build nests out on tree limbs during the summer. Eastern gray squirrels will den in trees year-round, using either natural cavities or leaf nests in mature trees or standing dead trees. Tree cavities must be at least 12 inches deep and have an opening at least 3 inches in diameter. On the west side of the Cascades squirrels may spend the winter in their snug stick nests. Nests are masses, sometimes round looking, about a foot or two in diameter, usually placed on a high limb, made of leaves and twigs and looking much like a crow nest. They build in both conifers and deciduous trees. In warm weather areas, such as the desert and hills east of the Cascades, Eastern gray squirrels will construct flatter loafing platforms or cooling beds in the trees with no hole or cavity. Some of the strong winter nests are permanent and woven together tightly. Eastern gray squirrels are almost exclusively an urban/suburban species.

Winter survey coming soon

WDFW's annual Backyard Winter Bird Feeding survey starts again in November. If you've participated in this survey before, you'll be receiving your 2002-03 winter survey materials in the mail soon.

If you'd like to join the more than 1,000 volunteers across the state who help collect this valuable data, write to "Winter Backyard Survey," WDFW, 16018 Mill Creek Blvd., Mill Creek, WA 98012, or send e-mail to thomppat@dfw.wa.gov.

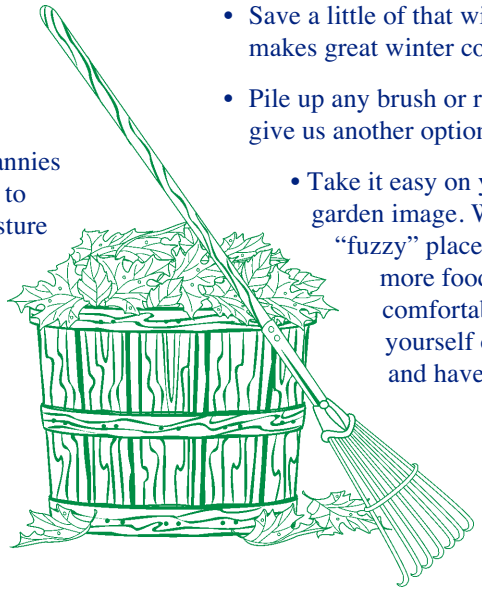
The surveying is easy: count birds by species that you see at your winter backyard feeders during several two-week long count periods from November through March, and fill in the data sheets provided. Next spring you send in your data sheets to help WDFW learn more about species population shifts from year to year.

Fall "To Do" list from your wildlife family

You or your spouse/partner may be making those fall "to do" chore lists for or with each other at this time, as daylight hours shrink and temperatures drop.

Here's another "to do" list from your local wildlife "family" that you may find easier to check off:

- Leave some dead flowers on your flowering plants to provide seeds for some us birds and other animals.
- If you must rake leaves off lawns, just pile them under some shrubs or other nooks and crannies to provide homes for insects that we birds love to eat; leaves make great mulch to help store moisture and keep weeds down, anyway!
- Keep that dead or dying tree right where it is (unless, of course, it's truly a hazard to you) so we can feast on the insects in the rotting wood or make winter roosts or dens in its cavities.
- Give yourself and your mower a rest for at least a portion of your lawn so we've got a patch of taller grass to hide and forage in.



- Save a little of that wild blackberry thicket for us — it makes great winter cover and we don't need much!
- Pile up any brush or rocks you clear around your place to give us another option for nests, dens, and shelter.
- Take it easy on yourself and let go of the "perfect" garden image. We wild animals like less tidy, "fuzzy" places more because there's usually more food and shelter there. Get yourself a comfortable chair, sit back, and congratulate yourself on having made a home for wildlife and haven of relaxation for yourself!

Crossing Paths Electronically?

Four years ago, in the fall of 1998 when we were seeking ways to trim costs, we asked you about shifting this newsletter's format to an electronic one via the Internet.

At that time, although 51% of you used the Internet, only 29% said such an electronic version of the newsletter alone would be satisfactory. The most cited reason for that difference was the need for notification of the newsletter's availability on WDFW's website.

Since then we have maintained this printed and mailed newsletter, but have posted each edition on our website, too, for those who like to scan it that way.

Now we're considering that all-electronic shift again, since we are beginning to build e-mail lists for notifying particular interest groups about issues, events, and yes, newly available newsletter editions.

We suspect that now, four years later, well over 51% of you use the Internet and e-mail, whether at home, the office, or at the public library. We're guessing that many of you are already on "listserves" or e-mail distribution lists for various interests. And in the interest of saving paper and energy, when you need or want a paper copy of something you see online, you print it out yourself.

That's what we're banking on, anyway, if we start producing "Crossing Paths" electronically next year, at least by the fall 2003 edition.

Unless, of course, we hear back otherwise from too many of you. If you have strong opinions on this one way or another, let us know. Either drop a note in the mail to Newsletter Editor Madonna Luers, WDFW, 8702 N. Division St., Spokane, WA 99218, or e-mail at luersmel@dfw.wa.gov.

If you support Crossing Paths electronically, go ahead and send us your e-mail address now so we can start building a distribution list, if we decide to go that way. (WDFW will not – and cannot – use your e-mail address for any other purpose.)

Time for a sign?

If you need a replacement or additional **Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary sign**, you can get one (or up to two) at the Mill Creek or Spokane WDFW offices for just $3.00 each if you pick it up and $4.00 if mailed (plus postage if you request mailing.)

Crossing Paths

WITH WILDLIFE IN WASHINGTON TOWNS AND CITIES

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary Program

Westside: 16018 Mill Creek Blvd.,
Mill Creek, Wa. 98012 / 425-775-1311
Eastside: N. 8702 Division St.,
Spokane, Wa. 99218 / 509-456-4082

Tell Your Friends:

Personalized Plates Help Wildlife

The Backyard Wildlife Sanctuary program, along with other non-game functions of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), is funded by the sale of Washington state personalized motor vehicle license plates. These distinctive plates — in your choice of unclaimed word(s) up to seven letters — cost an extra $46 for the first year and an extra $30 for each subsequent year. You can pick up an application form at any state licensing or WDFW office, or by contacting the Department of Licensing at P.O. Box 9042, Olympia, WA 98507, 360-902-3770 (telephone menu option #5).